



Idaho Fish and Game

Portneuf Wildlife Management Area

Newsletter

February 2015

Greetings!

This newsletter is intended to inform all of our customers on what's happening on the Idaho Fish and Game's Portneuf Wildlife Management Area.

This last year went by very fast again but we accomplished a lot of projects on all of our Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs).

All of the buck and rail parking areas have now been replaced and should be in good shape for many years. New entrance signs have been purchased and scheduled to be installed this summer. Heavy rains in August took their toll on a lot of the internal

WMA roads. A local contractor was hired to clean out the old water bars and install a few new ones. Most of the ruts were also filled in and smoothed out. Cooperative road maintenance work (with our neighbors) was also accomplished on the Bonneville Road with more scheduled for next year.



The neighboring lessee to the south did a great job of maintaining the Quinn Creek boundary fence again this year. We are in the process of marking the entire WMA boundary every 660 feet with carsonite signs or fence placards.

Quite a bit of time and effort was again spent battling weeds. Weeds that were targeted are all on the state of Idaho noxious weed list, and include: Dalmatian Toadflax, Dyers Woad, White Top, Black Henbane, Hounds Tongue, Canada Thistle, and Musk Thistle. Our summer crew of 3 spent 9 days spraying and pulling noxious weeds. We also hired the Women's Prison Crew for five days to mechanically remove Dyers Woad. The Bannock Co. Skills Crew spent an additional five days removing Dyers Woad. That's more than 765 hours spent controlling weeds. We did get another release of stem boring beetles for Dalmatian Toadflax this year. Evidence was observed that beetles from previous year's releases have survived. Hopefully the beetles will start getting the upper hand on some of the harder to reach, more remote patches of Dalmatian Toadflax.

Two established forb plots for a total of 1.6 acres are maintained on the WMA. The forb plot mix consists of a variety of forbs that will benefit big game, upland game and non-game species. Over six acres of food plots of high energy grain were also planted in two separate plots in 2014. Three of the six food plots are typically planted each fall. Total grain food plot acreage on the WMA is over 8 acres. These areas provide food mainly for upland game birds in late fall and early winter until the snow

covers it up, and then again in the spring as the snow melts off. Grain food plots were planted the first part of September which produced green up for the wildlife to take advantage of in the fall before going into winter. Pheasants, turkeys, sharp-tailed grouse, deer, and other wildlife were seen using food and forb plots.



We were unable to mow another area to open up some dense brush stands this fall. Total acreage mowed over the past years is approximately 15 acres. One or two more spots may be manipulated next year with the intent of rotating through these areas about every 5-10 years depending on brush reestablishment and brush density in adjacent areas. We also gathered approximately 60 lbs. of bitterbrush seed and 5 lbs. of sage brush seed on the Portneuf WMA. The seeds will be grown to seedlings for planting around the region as part of our Mule Deer Initiative and/or fire rehabilitation.

Sign-in boxes are still provided at all main parking areas to gather information on visitor demographics, frequency and purpose of visits. Visitors were only required to sign in once. In addition to the sign-in station survey, the twelve month

systematic user survey of individuals or parties interviewed on the WMA was completed in December 2013. If you were contacted we thank you for your cooperation. From data collected, we estimate there were 31,793 user visits to the Portneuf WMA in 2013. We also learned that 98% of the visitors were Idaho residents and of those 86% were Bannock county residents. As expected, most visits to the Portneuf WMA occur during the hunting season, but there are also some other periods of high use. A formal report of the twelve month survey will be completed and available in May.

Input:

We have almost finished up the process of rewriting the Portneuf WMA management plan. Thank you for your input on management of our WMAs. It has helped us develop these plans. Upon approval by the Fish and game Commission they will be posted on our web site (<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/public/wildlife/wma>).

If you make interesting wildlife observations please contact us or report it at:
<https://fishandgame.idaho.gov/species/observations/add>.

We did have some issues with illegal vehicle use - driving off of maintained roads again this year. Visitors even drove through our newly planted food plots. Please help us to remind folks to stay on the maintained roads. If you see a Fish and Game violation please contact your local Conservation Officer, Sherriff's Office or call the CAP Line at 1-800-632-5999.

If you have comments that may benefit the Portneuf WMA, or you would like to volunteer with projects, please feel free to contact me at the Fish and Game office by telephone: (208)-236-1255 or email: don.jenkins@idfg.idaho.gov . I am always interested in ideas to make the WMA and surrounding lands better places for wildlife.

Don Jenkins - Regional Habitat Biologist

